



# FY2006 Budget Highlights



## National Marine Fisheries Service Fisheries Habitat Conservation and Restoration

**NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS, or "NOAA Fisheries") requests \$34.1 million (M) in FY 2006, reflecting a net decrease of \$2.0M from the FY 2006 base level. New priority within the Restoration Line is \$1.5M for the Great Lakes restoration.**

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### FY 2006 Program Changes

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NOAA Fisheries requests \$34.1M to support its Fisheries Habitat Conservation and Restoration activities in FY 2006. NOAA conserves and restores habitat and services that are lost or degraded as a result of erosion, land subsidence, invasive species, fish passage impediments, oil spills, and other factors. Habitat pressures are significant at both national and regional scales. For instance, more than 700 hazardous waste sites threaten the Nation's coastline, over 2.5 million barriers impede fish access to critical spawning and rearing grounds, and 55 million acres of saltwater wetlands have been destroyed since colonial times.

Healthy coastal and marine ecosystems are essential to the Nation's economy. The commercial and recreational fishing industries rely on functioning habitat; 95% of commercial fish and 85% of sport fish spend a portion of their life cycles in coastal wetlands and estuaries. The value added to the national economy by the commercial fishing industry is more than \$28 billion annually, and about 18 million Americans engage in marine recreational fishing each year. In addition, coastal and marine waters support more than 28 million jobs a year. NOAA Fisheries fulfills its mandated responsibilities to conserve and restore ecosystem functions and sustain the socioeconomic value of the marine environment.

Of the \$34.1M request, \$18.8M is for Sustainable Habitat Management activities. NOAA's Sustainable Habitat efforts protect and conserve habitats important to NOAA trust resources. The primary focus is to ensure that living marine resources have sufficient habitat to sustain healthy populations. These habitats include

wetlands; diadromous fish habitat; and habitat of critical marine, estuarine, and riverine species. In addition, more than a dozen legislative mandates support NOAA Fisheries' work on wetland policy, coordination on permitting for energy facilities, improvement of diadromous fish passage, and our overarching work on essential fish habitat that seeks to reduce fishing and nonfishing impacts on harvested species. These efforts establish a basis for habitat protection through guidance documents, scientific reports, and technical advice.

Of the \$34.1M request, \$15.3M is slated for Fisheries Habitat Restoration, which includes the Community-based Restoration Program (CRP) and the Damage Assessment and Restoration Program (DARP). Through CRP, NOAA Fisheries has funded over 900 restoration projects that respond to habitat degradation and loss. The program achieves success through a combination of internal expertise, formal partnerships, and community participation. NOAA's investment in CRP projects is leveraged by factors of 3 and 5 through partner contributions of funding and in-kind services. Through the Damage Assessment and Restoration Program (DARP), NOAA restores trust resources injured by oil spills and hazardous substance releases. This multi-office program has recovered more than \$300 million from responsible parties, significantly leveraging NOAA's investment in the DARP.

On May 18, 2004, Executive Order 13340 was signed creating the Great Lakes Interagency Task Force, which established a regional collaboration to address nationally significant environmental and natural resource issues involving the Great Lakes. In support of this order, NOAA Fisheries will work collaboratively to restore aquatic resources at the watershed scale within the Great Lakes communities. Of the \$15.3M in funding, \$1.5M is targeted to support this effort aimed at restoring Great Lakes aquatic resources, with an emphasis on commonly occurring lake-wide problems such as sediment, the presence of persistent contaminants, and the loss of high-quality fish and wildlife habitat. NOAA will extend

the CRP to provide restoration funding to support partnerships and leverage additional funds from other Federal agencies, States, and local municipalities within the Great Lakes region. Overall, this program will develop a strong NOAA leadership presence to advance habitat restoration within the Great Lakes.

| National Marine Fisheries Service (OR&F)    | FY 2006 Change (\$M) |
|---|----------------------|
| <i>Habitat Conservation and Restoration</i> |                      |
| Sustainable Habitat Management              | -2.0                 |
| Fisheries Habitat Restoration               | 0.0                  |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                                | <b>- 2.0</b>         |

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